

# **Thomas Clarke Harris Papers**

## **PC.1860**

**Finding aid prepared by Fran Tracy-Walls**

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

State Archives of North Carolina

July 2014

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## Summary Information

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**Repository** State Archives of North Carolina

**Title** Thomas Clarke Harris Papers,

**Date [inclusive]** 1887-1934

**Extent** 1.0 boxes

**Language** English

Thomas Clarke Harris (ca. 1849-1934) was one of six children of the former Martha Ann Hunter (1827-1909) and Dr. Adam Clarke Harris (1823-1899), Granville County. Over his lifetime Harris worked as a store clerk, wood engraver, science museum curator (State Museum in Raleigh), civil engineer, draftsman, designer, inventor, and writer of adventure stories for boys, and of topics such as hunting and fishing, and coastal scenes and life.

**Abstract** Consists chiefly of published stories and articles by Harris, examples of engravings and technical drawings executed by him, and numerous newspaper articles relating to inventions and designs by Harris and some articles and letters to newspaper editors that reflect his viewpoints on various topics and his explanations of technical subjects. Of particular interest are a few handwritten manuscript essays, including "Some Personal Recollections of the Ku Klux Klan by a Member of the Order, 1867 to 1870" ; "The Carolina Banks," dated 1903, and a typed manuscript essay, "The Making of an Agnostic." Additionally, a small quantity of the news articles refer to Harris's wife and son.

### Preferred Citation

[Identification of item] in PC.1860, Thomas Clarke Harris Papers, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C., U.S.A.

## Thomas Clarke Harris Biographical and Family Note

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### Thomas Clarke Harris (ca. 1849-1934)

Thomas Clarke Harris, a native of Granville County, was one of six children (four sons and two daughters) born to the former Martha Ann Hunter (1827-1909) and Dr. Adam Clarke Harris (1823-1899).

Harris's formal education is unknown, but it appears that his family provided motivation and an above average foundation for educational achievement. His father, Adam Harris, appeared on the 1880 U.S. census as a physician and a minister, and *Branson's Business Directory* of 1872, listed him as a physician, a merchant, and as a postmaster of the Sassafras Fork post office. Thomas's mother, a native of Halifax County, was recognized in *Scientific American* magazine (17 February 1877) for her invention of a useful bread toaster.

Two of Thomas Harris's brothers were graduates of the University of North Carolina: Eugene Lewis Harris (1856-1901) and Hunter Lee Harris (1866-1893). Eugene was also a graduate of Cooper Institute, New York City, was awarded a Ph.D. at UNC. Later, Eugene was prominent in Chapel Hill and Raleigh as an artist. He was a former registrar of UNC and is credited with designing the landmark Old Well on the university campus. He was also credited as the first North Carolinian to serve in an administrative position in the YMCA. Hunter Lee Harris also attended graduate school at UNC and served as a math and geology instructor at the university, 1891-1892. Tragically, he died in 1893 in a drowning accident.

Census records and family genealogies show Thomas Harris married circa 1877 to Annie L. Patterson (b. ca. 1855), a native of Louisiana (as were her parents). Thomas and Annie were entered on the 1880 U.S. Census, as residents of Raleigh, and parents of Stanford, a boy of one. The occupation of Thomas listed at that time was that of a wood engraver.

Subsequently, Thomas worked as a curator, during the 1880s and part of the 1890s at the State Museum in Raleigh, an early name for the institution that has evolved into the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences. By 1896 he was employed as a draftsman with the U.S. Corps of Engineers, and engaged for around three years at Fort Caswell, N.C. located on Oak Island, Brunswick County, near the mouth of the Cape Fear River and the Atlantic Ocean. This time coincided with the time the federal government had appropriated funds to reconstruct the fort.

By the time the 1900 U.S. census was enumerated, Thomas and his family were living in Baltimore, Maryland, where he was working as a civil engineer. Other children born to Thomas and his wife were named, including two daughters, Martha L. Harris, age 18 and working as a typewriter (an early designation for both the typist and the machine); and Annie L. Harris, age 12; and son Stanford Hunter, age 20. Additionally, a nephew, E.[Eugene] E. Hunter, also 20 and a native of North Carolina, was living with the Harris family. Like his cousin, Martha, Eugene's occupation was listed as "typewriter."

Over his lifetime, Thomas Harris worked as a store clerk (during his youth in Granville County) a wood engraver, a science museum curator, a civil engineer, a draftsman, a designer, an inventor, and a writer of adventure stories for boys, and of various topics such as hunting and fishing, and coastal scenes and life, including the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Though he moved with his immediate family to

Baltimore, Maryland, around the turn of the century, his writings after that time convey a deep attachment to his native North Carolina. It is uncertain when he died, but one of Harris's dated writings (6 March 1934) in this collection indicates that he was well over the age of 80. It appears that Harris and his immediate family all died and were buried at Baltimore.

### **Stanford Hunter Harris (b. 1879-)**

A son of Thomas and Annie L.(Patterson) Harris, Stanford was listed in the *Alumni History of the University of North Carolina* as a native of Raleigh and awarded the B.L. degree (Bachelor of Laws, now obsolete) in 1897. The online Worldcat has an entry for Stanford's thesis in fulfillment of requirements for the Bachelor of Science degree, 1897, entitled *The Beginnings of Scientific Mechanics*. His occupation as reported on the 1900 census was that of analytical chemist. During that period of time, Stanford was attached to a hydrographic party and engineers working on a canal near Lea Junta and later near San Carlos on the shores of Lake Nicaragua. Stanford wrote two descriptive accounts that were published in newspapers, and these are included in this collection. (See Subject Files: Harris, Stanford H.)

## **Collection Overview**

Consists chiefly of published stories and articles by Harris, examples of engravings and technical drawings executed by him, and numerous newspaper articles relating to inventions and designs by Harris and some articles and letters to newspaper editors that reflect his viewpoints on various topics and his explanations of technical subjects. Of particular interest are a few handwritten manuscript essays, including "Some Personal Recollections of the Ku Klux Klan. By a Member of the Order, 1867 to 1870" ; "The Carolina Banks," dated 1903, and a typed manuscript essay, "The Making of an Agnostic." Additionally, a small quantity of the news articles refer to Harris's wife, Annie L. (Patterson) Harris; and two published new articles by Harris's son, Stanford Hunter Harris, including his impressions of Nicaragua in 1900 while he was working in that country with a hydraulics team and with canal engineers.

## **Collection Arrangement**

Collection arranged into two series: Letters, in chronological order; and Subjects, in alphabetical order.

## **Administrative Information**

## **Publication Information**

State Archives of North Carolina July 2014

## **Access Restrictions**

Available for research.

## **Copyright Notice**

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## **Acquisitions Information**

Gift of Patricia Phillips Marshall, Raleigh, NC, 5 March 1997

## **Processing Information note**

Processed by George Stevenson in preliminary stage; final processing by Fran Tracy-Walls

Finding Aid by Fran Tracy-Walls, October 2014.

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## **Related Materials**

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### **Related Collections**

Additional information on topics found in this collection may be found in the Manuscript and Archives Reference System (MARS) <http://mars.archives.ncdcr.gov/BasicSearch.aspx>

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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### **Corporate Name(s)**

- World's Columbian Exposition (1893 : Chicago, Ill.).

### **Family Name(s)**

- Harris Family
- Hunter Family

### **Geographic Name(s)**

- Baltimore (Md.)
- Fort Caswell (N.C.)
- Granville County (N.C.)
- Halifax County (N.C.)
- Raleigh (N.C.)
- Sassafras Fork Township (Granville County, N.C.)

### **Occupation(s)**

- Authors.
- Etchers and engravers.

### **Personal Name(s)**

- Harris, Annie L. Patterson
- Harris, Stanford Hunter
- Harris, Thomas Clarke

### **Subject(s)**

- Boys--United States--Fiction.
- Civil engineers.
- Civil War, 1861-1865
- Coast defenses.
- Firearms--Design and construction
- Fishing--Anecdotes
- Genealogy.
- Hunting stories, American--Southern States
- Hunting.
- Inventors.
- Ku Klux Klan (19th cent.)--North Carolina--Granville County
- Manners and customs--History--19th century.
- Manners and customs--History--20th century.
- Manners and customs.
- Museum curators--North Carolina--Raleigh
- Outdoor life.
- Outer Banks (N.C.)--Description and travel.
- Tobacco
- Wives--North Carolina.
- Women in war.

## Other Finding Aids and Related Material:

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See David Marshall ("Carbine") Williams Papers, PC.1753, State Archives of North Carolina. Williams was also a designer and inventor of firearms. Also see several images attributed to Thomas Clarke Harris are located in the Photograph Collections of the State Archives of North Carolina and can be searched through MARS.

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## Sources:

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Alumni History of the University of North Carolina, 2nd edition, 1924; online Findagrave.com memorial for Dr. Adam Clarke Harris, and other Harris family members, Elmwood Cemetery, Henderson, Vance County, N.C.; United States Federal Census, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930.

## Collection Inventory

### Series 1. Letters, 1887-1904

These four letters reveal some details about Harris's career, interests, and his relocation from Granville County, then to Raleigh, Wake County, North Carolina, and subsequently to Baltimore, Maryland.

#### Box-folder

Letter of Introduction from Ex. Commissioner of Agriculture, Montford McGahee, Dec. 16, 1887

PC.1860/  
folder 1

McGahee wrote that Harris had served seven years in Dept. of Agriculture and possessed a wide acquaintance with the minerals of the state was an excellent artist. [In 1877 the legislature established the Department of Agriculture and two years later authorized the Board of Agriculture to provide support for a geological museum. During subsequent years this museum was known as the N.C. State Museum and was the predecessor of the Museum of Natural History, later the Museum of Natural Sciences. Harris apparently worked within the museum during the 1880s and early 1890s.]

Letter of Introduction from Walter Clark. Assoc. Justice of the NC Supreme Court

PC.1860/  
folder 2

Justice Clark gave high praise of Harris's character, industry, and competence. In addition to long service with the Dept. of Agriculture, Harris, he noted, had recently worked with the U.S. Geological Survey.

Letter of recommendation by Elias Carr, December 16, 1896

PC.1860/  
folder 3

Carr wrote that Harris was currently employed with U.S. Engineers along the coast and had been recently at work with Capt. Reid Whitford of Georgetown, S.C.; that he desired

**Subject Files,**

a position in Washington along same lines of work before. Carr highly recommended Harris for the many years he was a curator with the State Museum.

Letter of Harris to Adjutant Gen. Dept. of the East, Governors Island, N.Y., Sept. 20, 1904

PC.1860/  
folder 4

Letter was written from Harris's address at 1401 Argyle Ave. Baltimore. He wanted permission to visit Batteries at Fort Carroll and North Point, near Baltimore. He said that he was employed three years as a draftsman in the U.S. [Army Corps of ] Engineers and designed a great part of the twelve inch batteries at both these points. He served under Gen. P.C. Hains and Lt. Charles Kutz. Previously he was at Fort Caswell, under Col. D. P. Heap and Capt. Craighill. Before these batteries were completed, he was put on furlough, without pay, for lack of work and was now engaged in municipal work under the Baltimore City Engineer, B.T. Fendall. Letter was signed by Thos. C. Harris, C.E. & Draftsman. (Letter typed and signed on back of War Dept. HQ endorsements.)

## **Series 2. Subject Files, 1893-1934**

The subject folders contain for the most part magazine stories and newspaper articles or letters to the editor, and a small quantity of genealogical notes. There is one folder containing two published news articles by Harris's son, Stanford Hunter Harris. Dates range from 1886 to 1934.

### **Box-folder**

**Boys (Stories for), 1904-1924**

PC.1860/  
folder 5

**Civil War Stories, Reminiscences, 1905-1914**

PC.1860/  
folder 6

Includes a story printed in the News and Observer, entitled War Reminiscences: Two Brave Poor Women's Work," an account of two women from Granville County, a Mrs. Smith and Mrs. North (20 May 1895); a story published in Sports Afield, December 1914,

## Subject Files,

Camp Cooking in War Times; and The American Bowie Knife, publication and date unknown. (3 items)

**Clippings and Notes, Miscellaneous, undated, and**

PC.1860/  
folder 7

Consists of a black scrapbook labelled by Harris as "Clippings: T. C. Harris" . This lettersized scrapbook holds a small quantity of clippings and notes written by Harris. Most are undated, but the last item was a letter to an unidentified newspaper editor, a light-hearted comment on the subject of marksmanship and dated March 6, 1934.

**Columbian Exposition, 1893**

PC.1860/  
folder 8

Includes two newsclippings, apparently from the *News and Observer*. One praises the map work of Harris, who made five maps, each fifteen feet long illustrating the state's distribution of crops; mines and minerals, forestry, schools, and the fishing industry. The article notes that these maps will be an important feature of the North Carolina exhibit at the World's Fair in Chicago (which would run from May through October of 1893). Harris was identified as curator of the State Museum, under the State Board of Agriculture. The other piece was written by Harris, named as a correspondent of the *News and Observer*, and entitled "A Short Lesson from the Exposition" .

**Engravings by Harris, circa 1878-1884**

PC.1860/  
folder 9

Includes four engravings, most of which were used as title covers of publications such as *The North Carolina Teacher*, Christmas edition, 1884. There is one miniature map of North Carolina, 1880.

**Firearms, Articles About, 1905-1928**

PC.1860/  
folder 10

Articles appear in publications such as *Field and Stream*, *The American Rifleman*. Includes 23 articles.

## Subject Files,

Firefly, The (Newspaper published in Granville County), May 5, 1874

PC.1860/  
folder 11

This four-page newspaper, according to the masthead and publications information, was published by T.C. Harris, Sassafras Fork, N.C. in Office No. 6, Roanoke Street. This small, four-page, two-column publication included the following notice: " Printing Press For Sale: The press on which this paper is printed will be sold cheap for cash. Size 9 x 11 inches inside the chase. As good as new." This issue includes a column of local news, and a column of advertisements, including one for Harris's Photographic Gallery, Sassafras Fork.

Fishing Stories, July 1903

PC.1860/  
folder 12

Only one of the two stories in this folder includes a handwritten publication date. This story, "Sturgeon Fishing at Winyah Bay" , includes an illustration, also by Harris.

Fort Caswell, 1896-1897

PC.1860/  
folder 13

Folder includes three news clippings referencing both Fort Caswell and Thomas C. Harris. One clipping dated August 31, 1897 features Harris and his role at Fort Caswell. Since December of 1896 he had been engaged in preparing plans and detailed drawings. At the time of the article's publication, Harris was said to be at home on a furlough, recovering from malaria contracted at the camp at Fort Caswell.

Granville County, Reminiscences of, 1896-1924

PC.1860/  
folder 14

Consists of various newspaper articles that include Harris's recollections of his native Granville County. Four separate articles.

Harris Family Genealogy Notes, undated

PC.1860/  
folder 15

## Subject Files,

Includes one handwritten list that named Harris and Hunter families. A typed note lists some Harris and Hunter heads of families listed in the the first census of the United States, 1790. Harris men residing in Granville County were Richard, Charles, Samuel, Robert, George, and Sherward. In Warren County, James and Isaac Hunter were listed.

Harris, Stanford H., undated and 1901

PC.1860/  
folder 16

Stanford (b. circa 1880) was a son of Thomas Clarke Harris. Folder includes two descriptive accounts by Stanford Harris: one of the Rocky Swamp Cave, in Halifax County, N.C. near Brinkleyville (undated); and another, 4 February 1900, describing life and customs in Nicaragua and printed in the *Baltimore American*. Stanford was a member of the hydrographic party working on the Nicaragua Canal. The letter was originally sent to Thomas C. Harris, at the time working as a draughtsman in the office of the City Commissioner, Baltimore.

Hunting Stories, 1903-1911

PC.1860/  
folder 17

At least two of the three hunting stories (one was in the form of letter to the editor) were published in the magazine *Sports Afield*. A letter published in the magazine's February 1911 issue includes some family and biographical information about Harris. There is a reference to Harris's maternal grandfather, Thomas C. Hunter, who he described as a superlative sportsman and rifle shot, with several details including the following image: "So true was he to the instinct of generations of hunting men that he spent the most of his time in the woods, though a large slave owner and planter and had no need of the meat." About himself Harris wrote that he was three years with the U.S. Engineers, building high-power batteries, and became well-versed on the various military arms. Harris's kin, Zeb Hunter, his grandfather, Thomas Hunter, were referenced in a story, "The Old-Time Hunter" ( *Sports Afield*, January 1903)

Inventions/Designs, 1895-1934

PC.1860/  
folder 18

Includes over twenty articles, sketches, designs, or blueprints by Harris involving a variety of inventions, building and furniture ideas. Many of the inventions/designs were

## Subject Files,

utilitarian, such as a homemade beam compass, and a homemade drill press, a farm pen for manure from a stable, an inexpensively built extension table and so on. Other ideas included a ventilator for subways in order to keep subway conduits free from gas, a gun carriage for use in coastal fortifications, an armored car. There is a sketch of Harris' Derringer, and .32, and blueprints for a Mechanical Time Fuze, and for a drop bomb. Publications featuring Harris's designs included the *Baltimore American*, *Forest and Stream*, *Scientific American*, to name a few.

## Ku Klux Klan, circa 1921

PC.1860/  
folder 19

This five page typed manuscript was written by Harris circa 1921 and entitled "Some Personal Recollections of the Ku Klux Klan. By a Member of the Order, 1867 to 1870."

## Medical, January 1900

PC.1860/  
folder 20

The single article in this folder is entitled "Practical Diagnosis," published in *Practical Medicine*, of Lowell, Mass., January 1900, Vol. X, No. 9.

## Miscellaneous Topics, 1893 and undated

PC.1860/  
folder 21

The varied topics among these eight pieces include "Facts and Figures of Amateur Gardening on a City Lot", "An Adventure in Arizona," and three typed manuscript essays: "The Making of an Agnostic," "Some Notes on Civil Service Examinations as Actually Conducted;" and an untitled reflections on death and the making of memorials to the deceased.

## Newspaper and Magazine Articles, Miscellaneous 1886-1916

PC.1860/  
folder 22

These varied articles number over 75. The topics are widely varied, with the following as a sample: "How the Trolley Cars Run," "How Jugs Are Made," and "The Material Prosperity of the Carolinas and How to Advance It." Publications include numerous

## Subject Files,

newspapers (cuttings exclude titles in most cases), *The [Baltimore] Sun*; *Popular Science News*, *The Youth's Companion*, and *Scientific American*.

Newspaper Articles, Personal, circa 1893-1931

PC.1860/  
folder 23

North Carolina Coast, 1903-1908

PC.1860/  
folder 24

Includes the following manuscript and printed articles by Thomas Clarke Harris: "The Carolina Banks," handwritten by Harris and dated May 1903, at Bath, N.C. (15 pages); published version of "The Carolina Banks," in *Outing*, May 1907; "Rambles on A Southern Sea Beach," in *Sports Afield*, May 1903; "Whale Fishing on the Carolina Coast," in *Sports Afield*, November 1907; "Life on a Light Ship," probably in *Sports Afield*, September 1908.

Photographs, circa 1918, 1919

PC.1860/  
folder 25

Includes two (2 and 1/4 inch) group photographs of eleven men, including Thomas Clarke Harris, at the Frankford Arsenal, 30 September 1919. Also includes a negative strip of several frames featuring a still camera; and a photograph of two sketches, presumably by Harris. Additionally, there is an image of Harris attired in a suit sailing a small boat, apparently en route to the Patapsco Flats, Chesapeake Bay, for duck hunting. The original photograph, not part of these papers, was published in *Sports Afield*, July 1904, and is accompanied by the editor's commentary.

State Toast, undated and 1916

PC.1860/  
folder 26

Contains a handwritten and a typed version (a copy on thin paper) entitled "A Toast to North Carolina" by Thos. C. Harris. Four lines rhymed verse, circa 1916. Harris's rendition was not adopted as the official state toast, but also merits remembering: "Here's to the land of the Oak and the Pine/Of Cotton, Tobacco, of Corn and the Vine/The land of the faithful, the true and the great/Here's to Carolina - the "Old North State."

Subject Files,

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Tobacco, undated and 1898

PC.1860/  
folder 27

Includes four stories intended to be humorous, or light-hearted, with heavy use of dialect, each with a tobacco-related main theme. The handwritten notation on one story, entitled "The Price of a Wife," was Christmas 1898, *Southern Tobacco Journal*, Winston, N.C.

Winyah Bay [South Carolina], 1896-1903

PC.1860/  
folder 28